When I read the first question of the article I laughed because it reminded me of a funny old *South Park* episode revolving around the once exploding controversy in the United States of thousands of children being diagnosed with ADD and how Ritalin was being prescribed and given out like candy on Halloween to treat the disorder, I even went back and watched the episode again before I began any typing. While I disagree with the notion that it is farce developed by children of the digital age, I cannot deny that it is an actual medical condition as characterized by *Web MD* with symptoms of such as “short attention span, distractibility, disorganization, procrastination, and poor internal supervision[[1]](#footnote-1)” among other things. I believe motivation and apathy for school for the vast majority of students has more to do with the ideals presented by Mr. Marc Prensnky, rather than an attention disorder that requires sedatives to control.

It is an extremely fair assumption that students can multi-task fairly easy in the 21st century classroom; for instance I went to 12th grade English class with a girl who knew how to could speed text in her left hand, play *Connect 4* on her TI-84 calculator in her right hand, listen to hip hop music on her IPod, all the while reading text from our English novel. She did it very well as she knew the material as well as any of us who read silently, she was just often reprimanded by the teacher by either receiving detention or being sent to ISS for refusing to hand over her belongings. Even though she scored average grades of B’s and C’s like everyone else she still got in trouble, Mr. Prensnky would call my 12th grade English teacher a “digital immigrant because he does not believe students can learn successfully while multitasking because he cannot.[[2]](#footnote-2)” I do not blame him though, he started teaching high school in 1976 just after he returned from the Vietnam War, and so it is natural for him to be stuck in his older ways of operation. I will give another personal example, had I been taught in middle and high school about how important being computer literate would be in my future in regards to getting a job, I would have paid attention and I only graduated high school in 2008. But the widely held belief by most teachers is that “the same methods that worked for the teachers will work for the students, which is an assumption that is no longer valid.[[3]](#footnote-3)”

One is my favorite television channels is *Investigation Discovery* which deals with all kinds of crime: petty, violent, and everything in between; I also enjoy the shows *Lockup* and *Law and Order SVU*. A general pattern that emerges is that the vast majority of people who commit felonies had very troubled childhoods, so the assertion that “social psychology provides strong evidence that one’s thinking patterns change depending on one’s experiences[[4]](#footnote-4)” could not be more truthful. Now this does not all have to do with crime, our experience with technology can change the way we learn. Student are probably going to spend 90 percent of their time on it anyway, so maybe the correct way to go to adapt to the new digital student is a Facebook page for class that is set up somehow, unfortunately Facebook is on the decline and may be irrelevant by 2015. As a great example I will use my love for current events; more than half of the things I learn everyday about what is going on around the globe come from Yahoo.com, nbc.news.com, or vice.com. So if this is how it is for me, I can only begin to imagine what it is like for middle and high school students now. I am finding out even now, at the young age of 24, that students are beginning to outpace me in technology as far as social media venues I have never heard of before. Mr. Prensnky states that there is no going back, that this change is like heading towards a “singularity,[[5]](#footnote-5)” which is a term I associate with black holes in astronomy when whatever the black hole is feeding on is pulled in pass the event horizon down to an astronomically dense and hot point where time and space break down. So it is pretty much a one way ticket, and if we as teachers do not evolve than we will be reduced to the boring role of just daily lecture, and we will lose an even greater number of capable but disinterested students;

I think the change has already or is almost about to hit overdrive as the older generation of teachers retires or prepares to retire. As for those few that even in to the new generation of educators will continue to advocate “backup education which is only useful in emergencies,[[6]](#footnote-6)” well Mr. Prensky is correct in his humorous response that “while that may make a good movie, if there were some sort of catastrophe to knock out all modern technology, we will have larger issues than kids not knowing multiplication tables[[7]](#footnote-7)” like where to find food, water, shelter, and maybe even how to repopulate the human race? I agree with the notion that “if we lack the time to find out who our students really are and what they like, it is hard to create an education that interests them.[[8]](#footnote-8)” This can be solved with a simple free speak period in which you go around the room or have students come to the front and then pair off into sections of the class depending on their interests. I would like to end with a question for Mr. Prensky that I found very troubling, he calls for the deletion of “many details of history except the broad strokes,[[9]](#footnote-9)” what does that mean, it is so vague that I am not even sure how to even begin to formulate a question as to what he sees as valuable to students in a history class?

1. Quinn, P (2012, May 15). AD/HD Symptoms WebMD.com Retrieved March 2, 2014 from WebMD.com [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Prensky, M (2001, October) Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. On the Horizon, Vol. 9 No. 5, Page 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Prensky, M (2001, October) Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. On the Horizon, Vol. 9 No. 5, Page 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Prensky, M (2001, December) Do They Really Think Differently? On the Horizon, Vol. 9 No. 6, Page 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. Prensky, M (2001, October) Digital Natives, Digital Immigrants. On the Horizon, Vol. 9 No. 5, Page 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Prensky, M (2008, January-February) Backup Education? Educational Technology, Vol. 48 No. 1, Page 2 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. Prensky, M (2008, January-February) Backup Education? Educational Technology, Vol. 48 No. 1, Page 3 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. Prensky, M (2011, January 24) The Reformers Are Leaving Our Schools in the 20th Century, On the Horizon in 2011, Page 9 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Prensky, M (2011, January 24) The Reformers Are Leaving Our Schools in the 20th Century, On the Horizon in 2011, Page 8 [↑](#footnote-ref-9)